



# *Milwaukee County*

Supervisor Joe Sanfelippo, 17<sup>th</sup> District

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Contact: Harold Mester, Public Information Manager  
414/278-4051 or harold.mester@milwcnty.com

## **COUNTY CANNOT AFFORD HEALTH CARE BENEFITS FOR DOMESTIC PARTNERS**

*County Board actions send confusing messages to employers and taxpayers*

**Milwaukee, WI** – On Friday, the County Board’s Personnel Committee voted 4-2 to approve extending health care benefits to partners of unmarried Milwaukee County employees. In response, Supervisor Joe Sanfelippo released the following statement:

“At a time when the County is wrestling to close an \$80 million dollar budget shortfall, which is projected to grow to \$153 million within five years, and if these shortfalls are not offset by permanent cost saving measures, I find it incredibly irresponsible to propose new spending that could increase our operating expenses by nearly \$4 million per year.

“Without the large scale wage and benefit concessions proposed in the County Executive’s 2010 Budget, the Board is faced with massive tax increases, large scale programmatic cuts, employee layoffs, or a mix of all three to balance the budget. Less than two weeks ago, the County Board passed a resolution mandating that most County employees take four unpaid furlough days between now and the end of the year. At that same meeting, we also voted to reject a labor contract with one of our largest unions because we cannot afford to continue to pay wages and benefits at the same levels we have in the past. These actions, combined with this vote from the Personnel Committee, send confusing messages to our employees. We’re telling them that we cannot afford to pay their wages and benefits, yet we are willing to spend \$4 million a year providing health care to people who do not work for the County.

“At a time when both County workers and taxpayers are experiencing financial hardships, we should be concentrating our efforts on ways to reduce operating costs rather than looking for new ways to spend money that we do not have. That’s why I will vote against this resolution when it comes before the full Board on November 5<sup>th</sup>.”

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